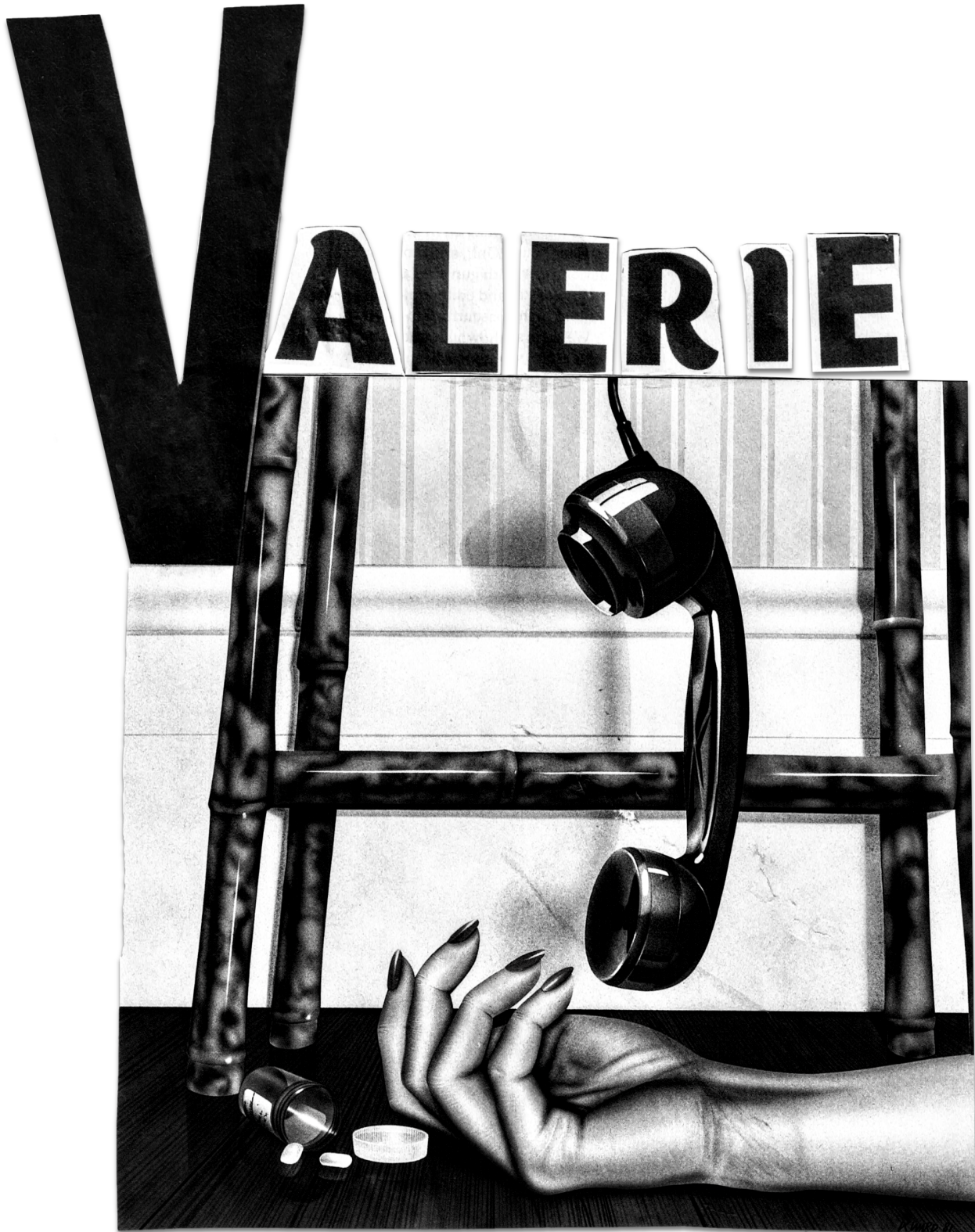
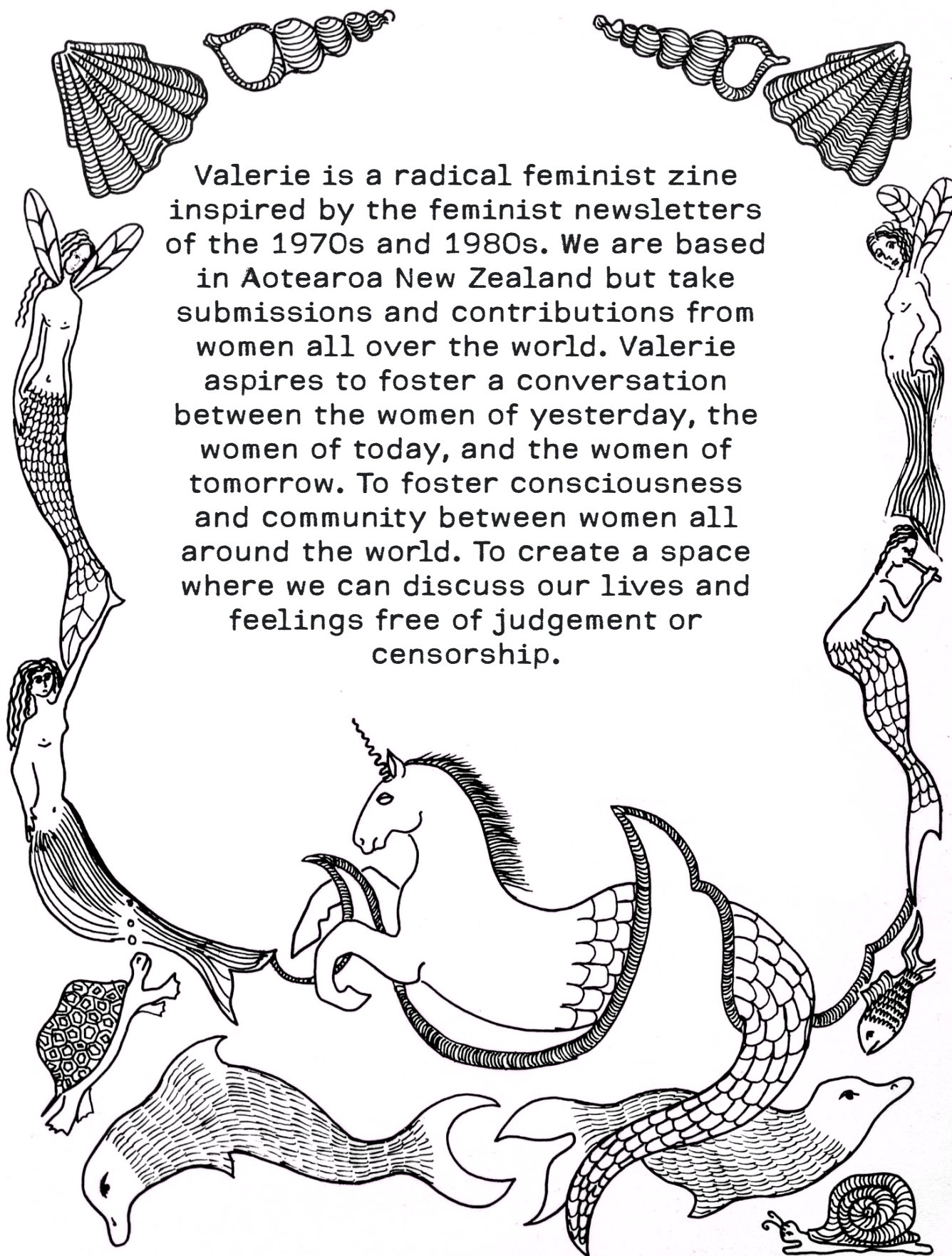


JAN/FEB 2025
ISSUE 1

MISOGYNY AND
MENTAL HEALTH



In this months issue: A love letter to the rad-curious / Original comics by Tabby and A. Britton / Book reviews: The Swashbuckler by Lee Lynch and The Exceptions by Kate Zernike / Original poetry by Lee Batalha, Phoenix Mendoza, Kitty Robinson, and Vane Vander / Women speak up: How misogyny affects their mental health / Brandi Nicole Kochan: In Memoriam



Valerie is a radical feminist zine inspired by the feminist newsletters of the 1970s and 1980s. We are based in Aotearoa New Zealand but take submissions and contributions from women all over the world. Valerie aspires to foster a conversation between the women of yesterday, the women of today, and the women of tomorrow. To foster consciousness and community between women all around the world. To create a space where we can discuss our lives and feelings free of judgement or censorship.

THIS ISSUES SOUNDTRACK

HATEYRGUTS.COM - GINA YOUNG
ROCKET HIPS - BABY GUTS
MUZZLE - DESTROY BOYS
GLORIA: IN EXCELSIS DEO - PATTI SMITH
CUTS - GINA YOUNG
COME ON PETUNIA - THE BLOW
FEMINIST HOUSEWIVES - BITCH AND ANIMAL
REAL GOOD CASE OF THE BADS - YUCKY DUSTER
SUICIDE HOTLINE - THE PRETTIOTS
SOPHISTICATED GIRL - THE PEZHEADS
NICK & NICK - THE GROWN-UPS
AMBROSIA - ROSIE TUCKER
BLOOD ROSES - TORI AMOS

a love letter to the rad-curious

anonymous

to the person i was, and to the friends i'm making now: i love you. taking an honest and curious look into radical feminism for the first time is no small feat. you've been criticizing things you have never dared to question, and you're learning about a whole new perspective. it's scary, i know. many of the people in your life who care deeply about social justice have told you that radical feminists are to be dismissed, ignored, eradicated. you should never interact with a radical feminist; don't even give them a chance to speak to you, else they may get through to you. those vile radfems will lure you in with their dogwhistles and they will play mind games with you and turn you into one of their own. none of this is true. it's alright. i went through it too. my curiosity was entwined with intense guilt, shame, and deep seated fears of abandonment and moral contamination. we need to trust ourselves. you must believe in your intelligence and in your ability to reason. you don't need permission to think controversial thoughts or to read whatever you can get your hands on. it's safe in your head. trust that you can think critically about what you see, and that you will not be harmed by exploring something you're curious about, something you might disagree with, or something you are willing to consider in earnest.

you may feel vindicated in your current convictions after holding them up to criticism. or you could change your mind. you don't have to. but know this: your strongly held beliefs will not change on a whim. trust that if you ever choose to change your own worldviews, it will be because you thought deeply about them and found a very good reason to change them. whether you end up agreeing with radical feminism or not, i'm proud of you. you approached an unfamiliar ideology with a curious mind, and that is not an easy thing to do.

FORGIVING
MEN

VIOLENCE
AGAINST
WOMEN

WOMEN AND MENTAL HEALTH

How has misogyny impacted your mental health? Has your mental health ever been dismissed by a relative, a loved one, or a health professional because of misogyny? What happened? How did it make you feel?

Misogyny is an insidious monster that compounds every mental health issue. It leaves you second guessing if every issue you've ever faced has just been "female hysteria." It leaves you questioning your sanity when you face medical gaslighting as well as gaslighting from the world around you. Certain issues you are just expected to face because of your womanhood. It can make you feel as though everything you do is never good enough or even as though you are a defective human being by virtue of just being female.



Womanspirit, 1981

My mental health has been treated like an afterthought due to my sex. I've been told that things like depression, anorexia, and OCD are "normal for girls/ women your age". Serious conditions like depression and bipolar disorder often get misdiagnosed as PMS or mood swings due to ones monthly cycle. It makes you feel like you are struggling alone with no sense of what is normal and what is a serious concern. You learn to downplay your issues in order to keep up appearances. You learn that women who "complain too much" are often seen as nagging or annoying instead of legitimate.

Lily

Not feeling like I fit in with other women, due to being autistic, gender non-conforming, etc. I don't see myself at all in the stereotypical image of womanhood projected by media or what's expected of you by society. This generally led to gender dysphoria, particularly in regards to my chest; wanting to hide and be viewed as "unsexed."

Anonymous

Negatively. I feel more anxious when I'm one of few women (or more often the only woman) in a room. I feel like an outsider looking through a window into a meeting of elites. Since my workplace employs few women, I worry if my appearance and performance falter, it will reflect badly on the other women I work with. I also struggle with anger issues and impulsivity - when I react badly to casual misogynistic comments and street harassment, it only adds to my reputation of being a "crazy bitch". Also, I believe that the stress and exhaustion I feel at taking care of my fully grown older brothers is due to "eldest daughter syndrome." On a more positive note, I enjoy "female anger" and "good for her" movies :-). I find it reassuring to see "improper" women like myself in music, movies, and novels. There have been a few occasions where my stress, anger, and fatigue have been written off as "lady problems" - luckily (or due to the fact that I don't engage with my region's mental health system) most people in my life are understanding that I lead a busy life.

Wei, mid 20s.

It's definitely made me distrustful, that's for sure. But honestly, I think the lack of response to misogyny has affected me more than experiencing misogyny. Misogyny is the oldest form of oppression in the world, predating all other prejudices, but at best, it's treated as a trivial afterthought, and at worst, everyone acts like it doesn't even exist. It almost feels like gaslighting. I've been fortunate enough to not experience much blatant misogynist dismissal of my mental health (at least, to my face). However, I do remember being upset about something years ago and my father reacted by calling me "hysterical". I stopped crying immediately and coldly informed him that he's never allowed to call me that again.

Shay, USA

It pisses me off that misogyny is everywhere I turn. In my creative hobbies, from my own mother, when I'm walking down the street, even having a feminine name in a video game incites harassment. I am so angry, stressed and anxious because I feel like I can't unsee what I have seen. Once, I was very drunk, and my husband at the time started having sex with me. I told my mom, because I felt violated and dirty, and she told me rape does not exist within the confines of marriage.

Anonymous.

Misogyny plays a significant role in my depressive thoughts. Comparing myself to other women, getting mad at my body for my natural appearance, thinking I'm a failure for not being pretty or keeping a spotless house, things like that. My suicidality usually relates to feeling "useless" to others, because my depressed brain also feeds on the misogynistic idea that it's not enough for me to experience life, but that I must "serve" others. There's more than just misogyny wrapped up in that idea, but it definitely kicks me when I'm down, so to speak.

I've had people tell me I'm being dramatic, I'm not really depressed, I'm just sad/lazy/etc, or that maybe I am depressed but it's not **that** bad. They usually shut up when I mention my periods of suicidality and self-harm. But I hate that I have to reveal that in order to be taken seriously. I don't know how much of it is misogyny and how much of it is people not taking mental health seriously. All the times I've been accused outright or subtly of being dramatic and making things up makes me feel crazy. It impacts my ability to believe myself, which is already damaged from being gaslit by my father the majority of my childhood. It makes me question my own symptoms, not just with my mental illness, but also with my relatively new and yet unidentified chronic illness I gained this year, and any time I get a cold or the flu or what have you. Even though I know empirically I have clinical depression that comes and goes, that it makes me fatigued, that it is something I'm still working on, etc. I question myself. Similarly, with whatever my chronic illness/condition is, I know I struggle with balance and on bad days need to use my cane. But I question myself, wonder if I'm being dramatic. There's been bad days when I haven't used my cane and I should, and then I fall. Because I doubt myself. Convince myself it's not a bad day, actually, I'm just overreacting, just being dramatic.

26, Texas

I was raped the first time when I was a minor and that definitely shaped my life. It brought me to self harm, drugs, anorexia and being hypersexual because I believed I owed sex practically to anyone. It pains me to think about this. How I reluctantly gave access to my body to men because I didn't think I had the agency to say no. Now I'm much better (I have a great therapist) but I'm still plagued by body dysmorphia which I believe it wouldn't be so crippling if we didn't live in such a hyper capitalist, misogynistic society. What's saving me is practicing radical feminism the more I can: I try to stay present with body and appreciate how much it does for me. I am also disabled so medical misogyny is another nightmare, I spent years before having the proper diagnosis and even now it's a nightmare when I have to go to the ER because since doctors don't know my disease they dismiss me.

My mental health has been dismissed A LOT by health professionals. After being raped I tried to kill myself more than once and no one understood anything, to them I was just a girl being both hysterical and depressed and they only cared about prescribing me benzodiazepines. I literally saved myself the moment I cut ties with them and chose to start lacanian psychoanalysis (I studied Psychology, so of course I was attracted to that path).

41, Italy

Terribly. it traumatized me. I've been made to be the hysterical daughter, friend, lover. I was not taken seriously when I attempted and was called attention-seeking. everyday when I lament feminist issues i am strongly criticized. I am gnc and that impacts my life negatively.

Anonymous

Once I overdosed on caffeine and ended up in the ER after 24h of puking and sweating the caffeine out. I was not pretty. The male nurse approaches me to say "why did you do it? You are so pretty". After 10 years i still haven't decided if i am hurt by the fact that a hurt girl at the ER gets written off as "self inflicted harm because of perceived ugliness" on sight or by the ulterior assumption that I shouldn't have done it because I was not ugly. A ugly girl would have been right overdosing?
Or the lie: I was not pretty by any standards, maybe the lie hurt the most at the moment because I wasn't even thinking of myself as an aesthetically charged body. I couldn't escape being seen/ rated/judged even when I was dying. And the age difference: I was 14 and he was 30+.

The overdose was accidental, the reason I played with drugs was a general malaise I couldn't explain. I felt like they were talking to the idea they had of me, not me. They didn't help me, because they thought my problems were rooted in my self image. Nothing they said felt like it was about me.

Eleonora, 24, Italy.

Immensely. As a child I learned to internalize my anger and my anger is and always has been expressed through self hatred and self harm. It impacts me every day. The self hatred is the ugliness I feel at times (and then some), and my lingering obsession with my appearance expresses itself as dermatillomania. I feel that, if I weren't female, my emotions would have been nurtured very differently and I wouldn't be so body-focused.

It was dismissed as being vain when I expressed my hatred with my appearance, and it was normalized because it was something every girl dealt with. How misogynistic is our culture that a 12 year old girl self harms because she is, essentially, worried about being unattractive to standards set by grown men? That self harming is what made my loved ones care, not the fact that a girl hates herself?

Hailey, 23, USA.

In third grade, I was diagnosed with asthma. As a result, throughout elementary and middle school, it was necessary for me to use an inhaler prior to my mandatory gym classes. In fourth grade, my first year of having to maintain this routine, there was a boy in my class who also had asthma, and so every day the two of us were required to walk down to the nurse's office to use our inhalers. We usually chatted on the walk down to pass the time. After a few weeks of this, I considered him my friend. He was nice to me, and not many people were that year. On one of the last days of school, however, he betrayed the trust I had in him. Our class was playing outside, given that there wasn't much else to do with the school year drawing to a close. While I was sitting on a bench in the shade, he approached me from behind, wrapped his hands around my neck, and proceeded to strangle me. He knew I had asthma. He knew I had difficulties breathing. He knew that meant I was an easy target. He strangled me until there were dark spots in my vision and he laughed the whole time. Afterwards, one of my classmates who had seen the attack helped me walk to our teacher, who told me to go back inside the school and pack up my things, that my parents would pick me up soon. I never saw him again (and I never want to). Nearly two decades later, I'm still fighting against him. I was diagnosed with PTSD when I was eighteen, with anxiety and depression occurring as a result. I tried therapy for a while, but it didn't do much for me. I'm medicated now and that's helped a lot. I have a job now and I'm going to college. I'm moving on with my life and I'm proud of how far I've come, but I still can't help but wonder how much further I'd be, how much easier things would be, if it had never happened, if he was the decent person I thought he'd been, if we'd never met. To this day, I get anxious when people stand or sit behind me. I can't wear necklaces or shirts that are too close or too tight around my neck, like chokers or turtlenecks. What was five minutes of amusement for him has been twenty years of struggle for me.

It took me years to get a proper diagnosis for my PTSD because I had been "too emotional" and "too sensitive" of a child. My parents and my teachers thought for a long time that I was just being dramatic, that I was faking my symptoms so I wouldn't have to go to school, when in reality I was having panic attacks that left me physically ill.

Mar, 28.

on misogyny and my own mental health

Anne B.

It didn't start with waking up to misogyny. It just happened after.

It's my senior year of engineering school, with around two and a half years lost to the pandemic. The previous summer I had started reading about actual feminism, decentered men, and figured out I was a lesbian and not asexual. The world's problems aren't weighing on me yet as I've got my own; coming out to my parents could have gone better and I'm so behind on my thesis it's eating away at me.

It's the extra summer I'm taking to finish and the therapy I'm in's only purpose is to help me to do so. I want to start reading again so I pick up Invisible Women which I've seen recommended. I don't finish it.

I submit my thesis at five metaphorical minutes to midnight and move back home with my parents, ashamed of myself. But it's okay, I tell myself. I just need a little break after The Institute. I'll help them move and get back in the game after we move into the new house.

I do get back into reading, properly this time. I read Valerie's manifesto. I read Kim Jiyoung. I finish Invisible Women. I read about problems affecting women that I've never been affected by, because how else will I truly understand our collective, systemic plight? I see headlines weekly about male violence not being punished, about religious subjugation, about the erosion of our identity as a class.

My own problems seem so small in comparison; what is unemployment and regret of your chosen discipline next to the suffering inflicted upon poor women, women of color at home and abroad, lesbians whose parents did reject them?

I do believe there is hope for women, but it's often hard to see it for myself. Every step seems too big, too frightening. But how can I even start to help my sisters if I can't help myself? My mother asks me if I just like being angry all the time (anger is a less vulnerable emotion to show than despair) and how am I to answer? I'm not the cause of it, and my own sense of empathy demands I feel it.

The holidays help, to an extent. A meager source of employment gives me some hope, however fragile. I want to put myself back together, piece by tiny piece. I can't truly shut out the world and her problems, but I can remember that the first woman I can help is myself.

safetycontrolrodaxewoman on tumblr

a young man hit on me at a nude beach. i told him to leave me alone, and instead he followed me back to where i had laid my towel down. he didn't leave until the woman next to me sternly told him that i wasn't interested in him.

i was scared and confused, and i was snapped into a dreamlike state. the boundary between myself and my surroundings dissolved, and i could hardly recognize myself or remember who i was. i started to cry. i needed a hug. there was nobody there who could have talked to me or hugged me, but i knew where and how i could get somebody to, at the very least, touch me.

so i dragged myself into the forest—a place known for hookups and anonymous sex between gay men—everything in me screaming at me to turn around and go home, get a warm meal, and talk to a friend. but in that moment i was nothing more than a vehicle for my need to be held; my own pleas against it ringing around my hollow body and falling on deaf ears.

i let the men touch my breasts, back, waist, hips, anus. found myself holding onto one man real tight, leaning into his embrace and wishing his fingers weren't inside my vagina. if things were different we could have just hugged. some of those men must have been older than my father.

not too many days later, i tightened a noose around my neck. i had no intentions to take own my life; only to feel as if i could. if i can control nothing else, i can at least choose when and how to die.

horrified by my own behaviour, i explained what happened to my therapist: i was desperate for touch and willing to risk everything for it. those men could have raped me or killed me, and i am very lucky that they didn't. i found comfort in choking myself and re-experiencing the same proximity to death that i felt on that day.

my therapist suggested that, if i were so interested in choking and in sex, i may benefit from exploring "the bdsm community" and seeking out an experienced dominant to choke me in a safe way. i was appalled and told her that i would not be subjecting myself to more sexual abuse on purpose. i had already faced enough sexual violence throughout the course of my life. what i needed was physical intimacy with somebody i loved. in response, she began to argue that my aversion to casual sex puts me "on the asexual spectrum" and tried to push me into reading up on demisexuality despite my adamant refusal throughout multiple sessions.

dykeiism on tumblr

i often wonder how women cope with being alive. when i was 10, two older school friends of mine showed me porn websites. they werent much older, only 2 and 3 years respectively. i was at the house of the youngest one. we were playing on his xbox and listening to undertale parodies. they were bored of minecraft, and wanted to do something else. they switched over to an ipad while i kept playing minecraft. they were snickering over the screen, and kept muttering to each other with each tap. i tried to get a look of what they were watching but i couldn't crane my head far enough without pausing the game. eventually, i pulled my eyes away long enough, and turned to look at the screen they had now turned around to show me. i saw, but i dont remember what happened next. a few years later, finding those videos on a male family member's computer when i was trying to play roblox. women, wearing glasses like mine, hair like mine, clothes like mine. men like my father, my teacher, my uncle. i see no need to recount the explicit details, but it broke my world. its not just a few bad men, its hundreds and thousands and millions of them. sharing, filming, watching, enjoying, rating, trading videos of women being violated in every which way possible. any man i see, i wonder, is he one of the hundreds and thousands? does he watch videos on pornhub of women getting brutally raped in the ass? beats off to women being hit in the face? these men are all around us. and they want to rape children too. stories of infant little girls dying from rape. these baby girls being raped by their fathers, uncles, brothers, teachers, strangers. the men watching these videos – or johns paying prostituted women, its all the same, anyway– leave their fantasy land of "petite redhead" or "naive teen" forced into "paina" and they come home to daughters and wives, sisters and mothers. sometimes i wish i could be oblivious like other women. maybe its cruel to try and radicalise other women, take away their rose coloured glasses. once you learn it you cant unlearn. knowing all of this, really how do women cope with being alive? most women have knowledge of basic misogyny, but most of us remain oblivious to the gargantuan iceberg that is female torture. how am i supposed to want to live in a world like this? how is any of this worth it, knowing that for every girl and woman saved there is another 10 who will just...never make it out. and when she is saved, she may leave physically, and some do, but she can never truly escape. how many women were taken from us? how many are being taken from us right now? how many more will be taken from us day in and day out? how many women and little girls were brutally raped to death? or, had their hopes and dreams raped or groped or molested away? we'll truly never ever know. sometimes i do feel worry that death is a less cruel fate than living in a world like this.



Gretchen

Amazon Quarterly, 1974

"RESTING BXTCH FACE"



"Lonely Men Don't Want Friends" by Tabby

I've been trying to make new friends. I'm most interested in friends who are women, but any nice person who's interested in being my friend is someone I accept.

Two of my friends are men in their 60s. In my experience, older men are easier to get along with.



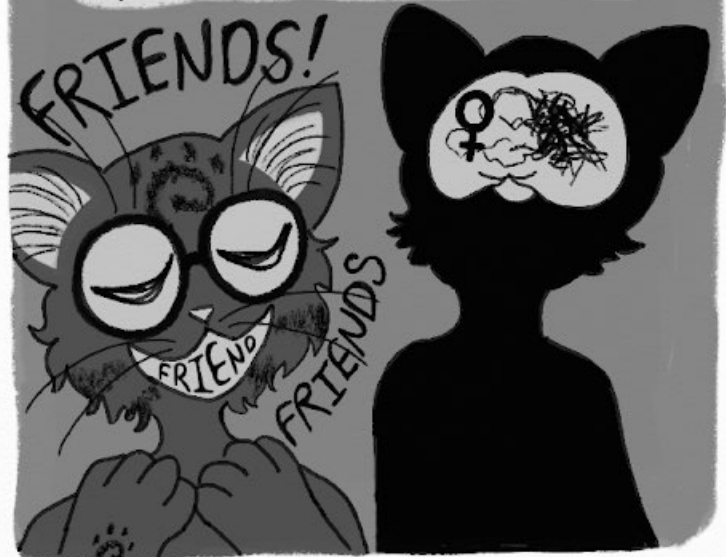
Men who are my age or younger often are... **Weird.** But you know, I don't want to generalize or judge. I do have some reservations with younger men, but when I met some guy who wanted to be my friend I was really happy.

We had good conversation and lots in common. I had life experience and knowledge that could help him improve his life. He could be helpful to me as well.



I thought we could make a huge difference for each other as friends.

I was very clear about platonic intentions from the start. But it doesn't matter what I say if someone else is set in his idea.



As soon as I mentioned my girlfriend, he quit talking to me.

A few other things happened and I learned he had wanted

SOMETHING ELSE





It seemed my friendship alone was not valuable to him.

So it made me wonder,
why am I suppose to care about
the "male loneliness crisis"?

While I was friends with this guy,
he talked about feeling lonely.

And yet....

All he had
wanted was
That **SOMETHING**
Without offering
it to him,
I had no value.

Men are lonely. There are people
like me eager to have a connection.
I was so excited to be friends!



"Male loneliness crisis"
sounds sad, like
they need help.
But saying out-loud
what they really want
makes them sound like
creepy predators.

In a women's support group I joined, we
were talking about the importance of
female friendship. One woman
shared she had read a study
investigating why more
women over men
survived the
holocaust.



The study indicated that it was
women's friendships that helped
them build the resilience to survive.

Women choose to make friends.
What men do, they are doing to
themselves. If they won't make friends
and then cry about being lonely, why
are any of us supposed to care?

It's sure not my fault men
make the world worse by
refusing to see me as anything
other than a domestic slave!

His loss!
☺





Furry Friends

We asked Valerie readers to tell us a bit about their beloved pets.



"Kiki, she is a gracious cat from humble origins (a pig chased her into my cousin's garden, and then she was given to us)"



"His name is Goose! I rescued him from a shelter adoption event, if the animals were not adopted out they would be euthanised. He loves to cuddle in the mornings to wake me up, HATES peanut butter, and protected me from an attack from another dog."



"My adult female cat is named Agnese, and my new disabled kitten is called Nestor"



"Her name is Wendy Torrance after the character from The Shining. She's feisty! She was rescued from my sister in law's car engine... she bit THROUGH my wife's fingernails as part of the rescue process."



"The grey one's name is Mila, which is short for Milagro, because we found her as a kitten on a busy street. The white one is Son, who came to my front yard and decided to stay with us. And the orange one is Nino, who came in through my window and laid himself down on my chest and also decided to stay. They all sorta just happened to come together. The white and orange one and super gay together, but they bully their older sister (Mila) because they're haters. In order of age it's Mila, Son, and Nino."



"The Siamese is Belly and the Tortie is Snazzy. Belly is sweet and cuddly but scared of strangers, while Snazzy is kind of like the queen of the house, a bit territorial. Gus is an old orange Maine Coon. He likes to carry around a small stuffed mouse and sing to it."



"This is Rocky! Me and my mom found him curled up in a hole under a grille with a serious case of scabies and several ants trying to eat him, So we named him after Rocky Balboa because he fought for his life. People often say stray dogs don't ever forget what they went through but to be honest I think is not his case, he's pretty spoiled and mostly a pain in the ass but I love him a lot. He tucks himself in to my bed every night <3"

From Our Bookshelves...

The Swashbuckler by Lee Lynch

Reviewed by Abi B.

This is an in-depth portrayal of lesbian life in the sixties and seventies, set in New York. It centres around two characters : a promiscuous, old fashioned butch named Frenchy, and her love interest, a troubled, music-loving lesbian named Mercedes. Mercedes feels things deeply, and struggles to parent her young daughter while dealing with the effects of a drinking problem and the abusive psychiatric practises she's been subjected to. We see New York's gay scene at the time through Frenchy's eyes - the seduction, the showboating, the socialising, the titular 'swashbuckling'. And we see it through Mercedes' eyes - the fun she has, but also the reckless sex, the outbursts, the racism she experiences from the lesbian community. All in all this is a touching, heartfelt and beautifully crafted story. Lee Lynch's characters are believable and human, her way with words is one-of-a-kind, the sex scenes are steamy, the messiness of real life is perfectly captured - if you can get hold of this book, I strongly recommend you read it!

The Exceptions by Kate Zernike

Reviewed by Anne B.

This book recounts the career of Dr. Nancy Hopkins, as well as the story of how her and the fifteen other female faculty at the time forced MIT to publicly admit to discriminating against them. If you're in STEM or academia more generally, you'd probably find it very interesting! It focuses on Hopkins early on in the book, and expands to discuss more of the women around the middle. There is also discussion of the general attitude surrounding women in academia from the 60s to the 90s throughout the book, which I found interesting from a feminist historical perspective.



valerie walker, u. of illinois

Feminist Voice, 1972

valerie solanas died alone

kitty robinson

you will not like reading what i write next. valerie solanas died alone. valerie solanas was typing at her desk. valerie solanas was in the tenderloin district of san francisco. it is a slum. it is a dangerous place where people suffer and die. like all slums and dangerous places there are interesting and brilliant people within it and beautiful sights to see. valerie solanas was not a beautiful sight to see. valerie solanas was alone. valerie solanas fell back into poverty. valerie solanas fell back into prostitution. valerie solanas fell back into addiction. she fell. there was no foothold or nothing for her fingers to grasp. she fell. she was typing at her desk. there were pages and pages and pages on her desk. we have no idea what she wrote before she died. she died of pneumonia at the age of 52 on april 25, 1988. when i read that she died in the forward to a physical copy of the SCUM manifesto i have, the male writing this forward said her dead body was beautiful, dainty and delicate in a white slip, emaciated and pure. when i read what he said about her corpse, i wanted to shoot him. i wanted to take up a gun. they institutionalized her. they put her in the madhouse. more than once. over and over. she fell away from everyone. valerie solanas was sexually abused by her father. valerie solanas was a lesbian. she was a madwoman. she wrote. her mother burned all of her remaining possessions after she died.

women failed valerie solanas. sane women failed valerie solanas. other madwomen failed valerie solanas. i was not alive but i failed valerie solanas. every time i betray other madwomen, i betray valerie solanas. when i fail myself, i fail valerie solanas. women don't want to talk about this. every time someone references scum manifesto, makes a joke, refers to her as a saint, i want to stop the conversation, i want to smile in that way that other women shy from and say, she died alone, did you know that? she died alone, sick, an addict, a prostitute, and then her mother burned all of her belongings and her now permanently lost life's work? can you handle that? will you flinch from that? why is it that a movement that worships madwomen sanitized as idols spurns her now and spits on her as often as we can? do you know any madwomen? are you a madwoman? do you know someone who has died alone? do you know someone who has died by her own hand? do you know someone who is dying in addiction? do you know someone who is dying in prostitution? do you know someone who was sexually abused by her father and is now fractured for her life, running from/chasing down the deal of a sexual abuse victim minute by minute and hour by hour?

valerie solanas died alone. what can i do? please don't let me die like that and i won't let you die like that either. feminism must grasp the hand of the women who are falling and not let go. i know we are heavy but i must believe that we are strong. i have a foothold. i'm reaching for you. take my hand. now, hold.



Jenny Miller and Saralinda Grimes. Photo by Richard Cohen of Madness Network News. Published in Big Mama Rag, 1983.

"SURVIVE"

Vane Vander
mayvaneday.org

before I was female, in the womb where none could see,
I was still I, was still I, was still me

swaddled in pink, blanket, blood shed
an artist only given a palette of red

an animal taken human shape
but just as afflicted as that cursed ape

and when I begged you to let me exist
wild as I am
you clipped my wings, hypocrite,
became a thousand cams

stranger danger, constant stress
of finding you around every corner:
shedding my skin, lyzard,
the fire inside only grows warmer

cloaked myself in shadows,
met with souls
who taught me of freedom
while the blood between us grew cold

I want you to hurt
as I have hurt
as you have hurt me!

"I've had enough!"

is it truly the daughter's fate
to first be conquered by their father?
for I perish a million times under the point
that one confuses so often for the whole

but recently, come these veins
filled now with wyrmic rage,
I'll take the pen, I'll write my own damn page,
I won't let you take my soul!

piercing eyes like a thousand knives
burrow through your soul like a million mice
flooding in, a tsunami, annihilating all in their wake
the future that you dumped on my shoulders to make

I'll turn your blades against you
reversal digging in:
remember that you aggressed first;
self-defense is not a sin

watching you bleed out from under my claws,
redemption a lost cause

**The Condensed Rage Of Confined Woman
Claire Seekins**



The Condensed Rage of Confined Woman.
-12.2.76.
Claire Seekins

Untitled

Lee Batalha

911, what is the exact location
of your emergency?
My recorded voice responds,
to every call that comes into
the call center.

It's mostly women here.
Some, like me, are new
and from quiet rural backroads
while others are old-hat
from Baltimore, New York, DC.

I'd thought the worst calls
would be the cardiacs.

[Okay, Mary, I'm going to tell you
how to perform CPR -
--I can't, I can't, oh, David!
Please, please wake up!]

I always want to reach
through the phone and hug
the people on the other end.
But still, I was wrong.
The worst are the domestics.

[Hi, I'm a therapist and my
11 year old client is hiding
on the roof because his dad
is hitting his mom...]

[Please please send someone,
anyone, hurry up!
He's gonna kill me! Please!
Please!]

[Hi, I - I called earlier - about
my husband - and
everything's fine now.
Please don't send anyone.]

[Hey, I think my wife just called...
She's got some issues, y'know...
No need to send
anyone.]

At the call center, we've all developed
a fucked up sense of humor.
Even with domestics.
I used to recoil at that,
but I get it now.

[Hey, it's our fav Kelly with her man again!
Think she'll punch the EMTs again?
Ha! One sec, I'm just gonna go cry for a few.
OK, I'll cover. You take your time, honey.]

I think one day
I'll stop crying, too.

And I want to leave off on a hopeful note,
because I truly do know we do help victims.
More importantly, we aren't the only ones trying.
But fuck, it's midnight here
and I just want to vent.

911, what is the exact location
of your emergency?
Well, ma'am, the problem is,
from backroads to Baltimore,
it just feels like it'll never stop.

Fatherhood

phoenix mendoza

there is no father of anything
only stolen spines, stolen herbs, stolen skins
men draped in our bloodied, tooth-torn hides saying
I invented medicine
I invented science fiction
I invented birth

but everything they do is a copy of a copy
resting on the wide hips of the sea
ripped off of Her glorious blueprint
incisors pried from our mouths and pasted in
cheap, injectable silicone replica lips fashioned from the melted down bars
of the very cages they lock us in

there are no fathers
only the vapid milk wrung from mutant clitorises
grown long and fragile and crushable
beneath a bare foot
and some man somewhere is getting off to that
because there is nothing in the word left that some man has not gotten off to

men cannot create, only consume
they overturn every stone
and lick up the bugs underneath
shoot pornography of the wriggling worms
pull them apart and make snuff films of their mangled bodies
Pin butterflies beneath glass and label all their parts

they see a women in fur and they come to her
they see a woman in nothing and come to her
they see a woman running and come to her
they see a woman breastfeeding and come to her
they see a woman made from plastic and come to her
they see a little girl and come to her

they see a woman who loves women(and only loves women
not knock off women
not surgically created women not Frankenstein
women not men who call themselves women and get away with it
because to not be afraid of men means to be raped, drilled, killed)
and come to her

they see a woman with a knife and come to her
they see a woman say no and they come to her
they see a woman in make up and come to her
they see a woman without make up and come to her
they see a woman crying and come to her
they see a dead woman and come to her

but they are not even the masters of death
grave-rot and darkness belong to women
as do life and light
the whole of the earth was, is, created by and belongs to women
which is why they cannot stop raping it, drilling it, killing it

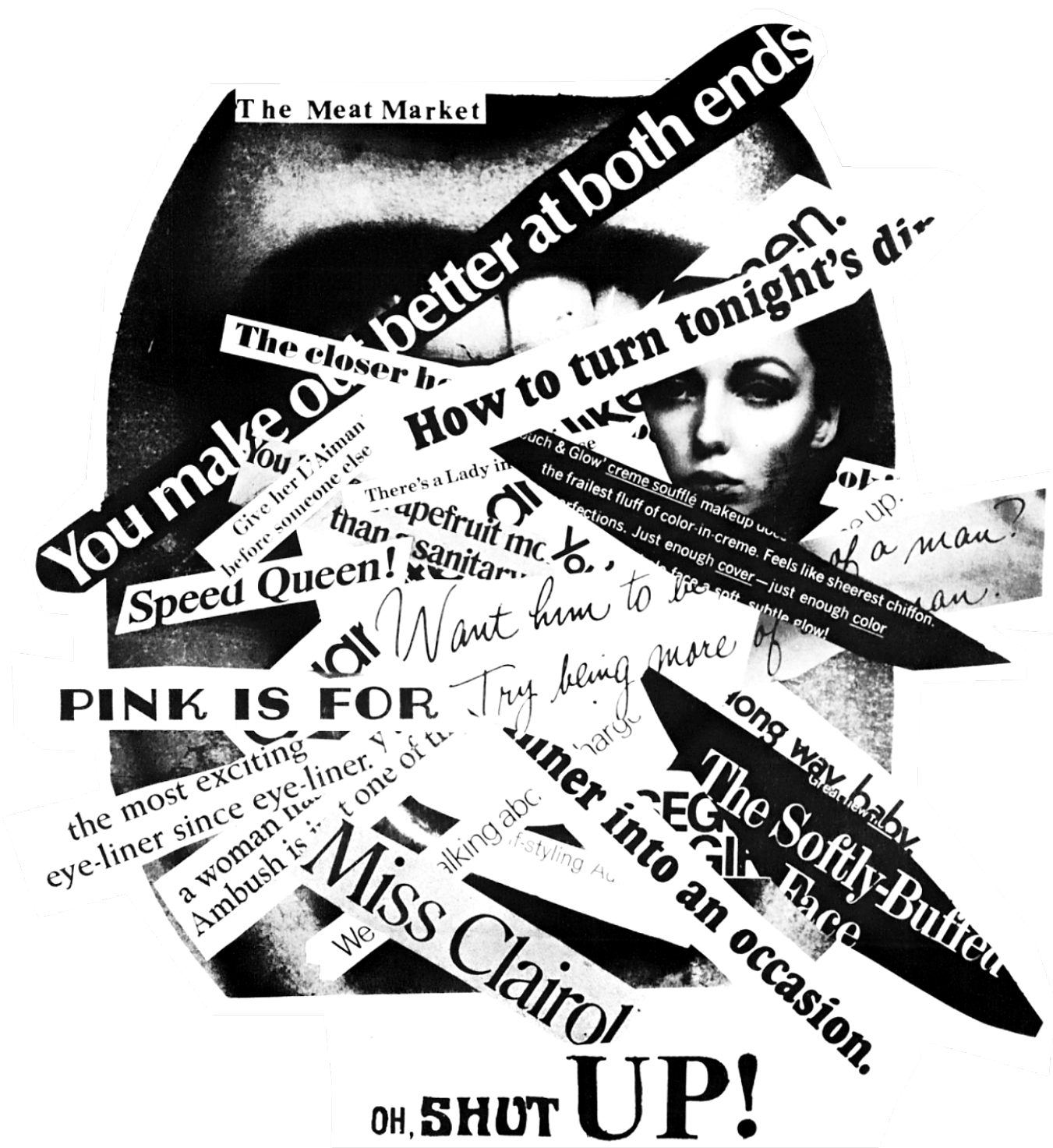
explaining it, sanctifying it
in their own name, to their own image, to their own gods
these same men grow their hair long and call themselves daughters
climb into a wedding gown and write about women getting murdered
claim it is their own murder, claim they know better than anyone
what it is like to murder—I mean—be murdered

there are no fathers, only bastard stallions
who prowl the periphery of the Hampstead Heath bathing ponds
dreaming of a way to scale the ivy and find a passage in
to this thing they want only because they have been told they don't already
have it
and they are not fathers they're snot-nosed tantrums
banging fists on every wall until it crumbles

it's a woman's Earth but a man's World
which is why every space we run to gets hijacked and ejaculated on
every scream of rage gets twisted up
like a balloon animal and blown back at us
emblazoned in the word 'hateful,' because there is no greater act of hate
than to hurt
a man's feelings

they see themselves in the mirror
wearing women's skins they've pulled off and bedazzled
in the pantomime version of what they spied on and jerked off to
when they watched their sister's sleepovers through the hole they drilled in
the wall
compelled by an entitled hunger they'll later call envy
they'll later call sadness

copper sticky and jizz-slick they tug themselves
stare at their lipstick lips until their eyes blur and their angles soften
and for a moment they can imagine they know what it feels like
to be a Creator, to be a Goddess
Instead a white maggot in eyeshadow shooting blanks and crying
daddy, daddy, daddy



Everywoman, 1970



Martha Stewart Got Real About Aging, Botox, and Filler: 'I Don't Want to Look My Age'

Charli XCX Says Fillers Are
Sculpting Tools and
Procedures

Look Sharp! The Best Jaw-
Sculpting Tools and
Procedures

Yes, Guys Watch Porn That
Looks Like You, and Yes, It's
Totally Endearing

Sabrina Carpenter's Viral Blush Combo
Snail Slime Is the New
Moisturized Skin (Srsly)

HEY HAVE DADDY ISSUES -
Broken Sluts And How To Treat
Them

I Finally Have Clear Skin, Thanks to
This Laser

The top ethical porn sites that are inclusive
and empowering

Can You Manifest Clear
Skin?

OBLITERATED As Cum Runs Down
Her Face

What, Exactly, Is the Kim
Kardashian-Approved
Salmon-Sperm Facial, and
Does My Lipstick Match My Aura?

OH, SHUT UP!

Valerie, 2025

HOME MADE GOODS



one-of-a-kind
handmade
figurines of
women and
colorful
creatures, as well
as original art
prints:
littlebigwomen
on Etsy



Make a statement with this
powerful t-shirt from
camillefreytag.bigcartel.com.



Awesome drawings of
bugs and other critters
with feminist quotes

Pillarsalt on Redbubble



Brilliant iridescent feminist-lesbian stickers:
<https://womyn.gumroad.com>

Brandi Nicole Kochan: In Memoriam

Brandi Nicole Kochan, known as Runawaysiren940 on Youtube, was only 23 years old when she passed away on January 9th, 2025, from mismanagement of her Type 1 Diabetes. Over the six years that she ran the Runawaysiren940 channel, she accumulated 74k subscribers, invariably inspiring each and every one of them with her eloquence, her well thought out and thoroughly researched arguments, and her passion for womens rights. She will be sorely missed. Currently, Brandi's family is fundraising for the



Art by Ratchetjak on tumblr

repatriation of her body to the United States, and her subsequent memorial service and funeral. If you would like to help her family out, you can go to www.gofundme.com/f/support-brandis-repatriation-and-memorial. Any funds leftover will be donated to Mosaic Georgia, a Sexual Assault Center and Children's Advocacy Center that Brandi volunteered at during her time in the United States. You can donate directly to the charity at www.mosaicgeorgia.org.

Below are a few things that people had to say about Brandi.

"I had the pleasure of meeting Brandi in person once, when she came to visit Osaka. We spent a day together. I was taken aback that this young, young woman was so well-read, eloquent, and independent in her thinking. Truly, we lost one of our greats before her time. My heart breaks with the senselessness of her death. May she rest in peace."

"I didn't know her. But I felt a kinship anyway; all over the world, all us lesbians are in this together. Her voice will be missed. Rest in peace Brandi."

"I'd just like to say that she was super intelligent and she helped me become more versed on feminist topics with her videos. Finding out she passed felt like a light dimming."

"Brandi was my introduction to radical feminism, and I am forever grateful. rest in power, Brandi."

"Brandi- I think I'll miss you forever. You were always making me laugh, pushing me to have adventures, inspiring me with all you accomplished. All of the future plans and what-ifs will haunt me. But I am still so glad that our lives touched."

"The brightest and most radiant light has been extinguished with the passing of Brandi. We became friends in late 2020 and she was the silliest, goofiest and kindest woman I've ever had the fortune of befriending. She was so smart and thoughtful. A great and loyal friend who was there for me when the world came crashing down around my ears. She was a fountain of knowledge on the oddest information and she had a way of inspiring the most amusing conversations. Several topics of conversation were banned solely because of her on the server where we met. The mechanics of turtle anatomy and intimate relations between transformers were the most egregious I do believe. We spent many nights chatting and laughing our heads off for hours and I miss her dearly. I miss her many impromptu nicknames for me, I miss her requests for my thoughts on this and that, her poetic and flowery flattery whenever she had a request for a pdf or editing of her fics. I will miss her postcards. I'll miss her smile, her laughter, and her funny poses in selfies. It is an injustice that this brilliant young woman passed away because of a preventable illness. She would still be here had she only been fortunate enough to be born to a country with socialized healthcare instead of the travesty that America calls a healthcare system that led to her death. Rest in peace, my dear. I know you're still writing your fics and making videos wherever you are. Hopefully you'll manage without my advice on flirtatious dialogue."

"Brandi had a rational, balanced perspective with insightful analysis. She made steady and frequent posts, always using her own words. She inspired radical feminists globally from as far as Russia, and I saw many detransitioners comment that her words made them feel less alone. I always admired her bravery in travelling, often by herself, and her enthusiasm for learning and experiencing different ways of life. I also saw that she had many connections and worked with activists from different places. Brandi helped myself and many other women remember that we aren't alone. R.I.P runawaysiren940, you'll never be forgotten."

See Red Women's Workshop, 1977

Each year British doctors prescribe
over 350 million tranquillisers

nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of these are
swallowed by women

In the 1970s International Drug
Companies made over
£500 millions profit a year

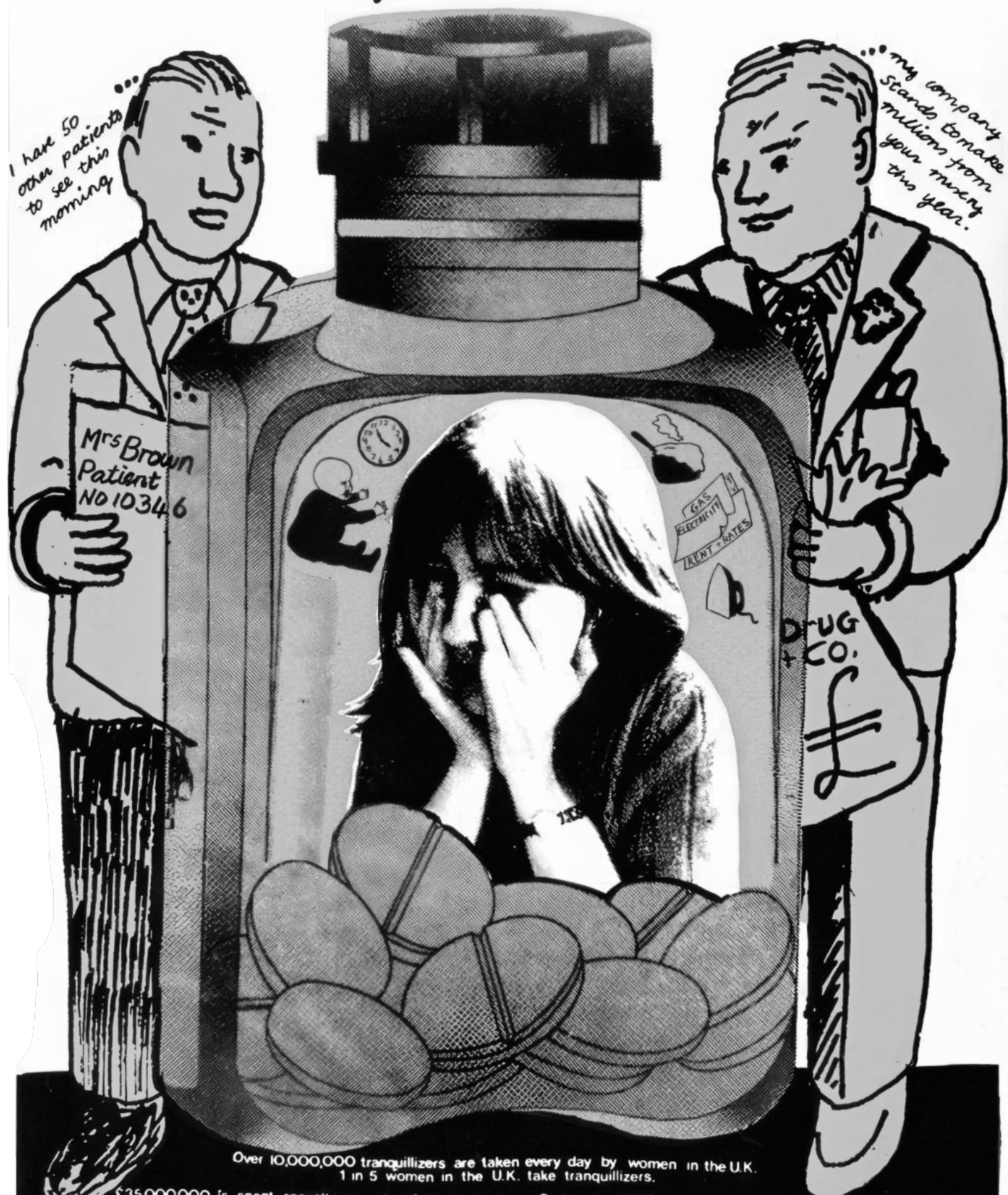


DON'T BREAK DOWN

BREAK
OUT

See Red Women's Workshop, 1977

Take a pill Mrs Brown.



Over 10,000,000 tranquillizers are taken every day by women in the U.K.
1 in 5 women in the U.K. take tranquillizers.

£35,000,000 is spent annually on advertising these drugs. During the 1970's drug companies made over £500,000,000 annually. Valium is the most profitable drug ever manufactured - it is addictive, stops being effective after 4 months, dulls concentration & causes dizziness, drowsiness and sometimes aggression. Doctors too easily prescribe them to patients whose problems they don't have time to deal with. Ask your doctor exactly what you are being prescribed.

DON'T LET THEM KEEP US BOTTLED UP.

Men are lonely, you say? Well, of course they are. They are the petulant child waiting for their mother to play with them. Poor men. Women have been too busy, working for your benefit-- feeding you, making your clothes, cleaning up your messes -- to play with you. Writhe in the mud and scream and cry, pathetic as you are.

Men are lonely, of course. They don't have their docile help-meets anymore. Their punching bags have started to punch back. Poor men. Thought you could abuse women for thousands of years, never imagining a consequence. So sad, that your suffocating grip has started to slip. Lonely, you say? Be thankful that is all you are.

Men are lonely, they claim. Another of a million guilt trips and lies. When will they get bored of this game? Maybe if they wiped their crusty asses and grew some empathy they'd meet a woman who might give them the time. But they don't want to put in the effort. Why should they? Their fathers didn't have to, and their mothers couldn't leave. Ah, those "good old days" where women were legally property. Kept pets. Imagine a man so worthless he couldn't get a woman to willingly stay with him. Or don't-- the world is full of them. Poor men, unwilling to change.

Men are lonely? What, has a woman never been? Never cried herself to sleep, never frantically looked for anywhere to run, never cried out for help to those who willingly ignored her, never screamed and screamed and screamed and SCREAMED?

Men, you know nothing of loneliness. Women have been with your pathetic disgusting disease-ridden selves since the dawn of time. We birthed you, raised you, supported you, loved you. And you hit, yelled, stomped, slammed, stole, raped, and killed us for our efforts. Count your blessings. If you think this is hard, you aren't ready for what comes next.

Crystal



Illustration by Lee Batalha

Valerie needs YOU!

Yes, you. Your submissions will be what keeps Valerie going.

The next issue will be coming out in late March, for international women's month. We're looking for pretty much anything women-centric. Reviews of feminist (or not-so-feminist) books, films, albums. Writing on specific women in history whose lives you find interesting. Writing on a woman in your life you admire. Writing about what you love about being a woman, or what you hate about being a woman, or anything in-between. Art or photography. Short stories. Poetry. Rants, raves, opinion pieces. Anything else you can think of.

Send your submissions to handsomefruiteater74@gmail.com by the 22nd of March.

